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ABSTRACT

Three special field-based student teaching projects at Indiana University which include on-site course work are briefly described. Data are presented that indicate that education majors at the university: (a) enroll in demanding, multiculturally oriented student teaching programs; (b) request and accept out-of-state placements in ethnic minority settings; (c) pursue and obtain a significant number of out-of-state teaching positions; (d) serve as beginning teachers in schools with multicultural student bodies; and (e) are employed at a very favorable rate despite the current teacher surplus. Additional data document support of exparticipants for alternative field experience and encourage teacher trainers to develop new projects. Among concluding suggestions are that (a) leagues of colleges and universities be formed to exchange, orient, and supervise each other's student teachers; (b) high priority should be given to programs which provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to live and work in a large ethnic-group community; (c) multicultural faculty should teach the methods and other courses prerequisite to student teaching; and (d) student teaching alternatives in ethnic minority settings should feature the utilization of supervision specialists representing the appropriate ethnic minority. (Author/HMD)

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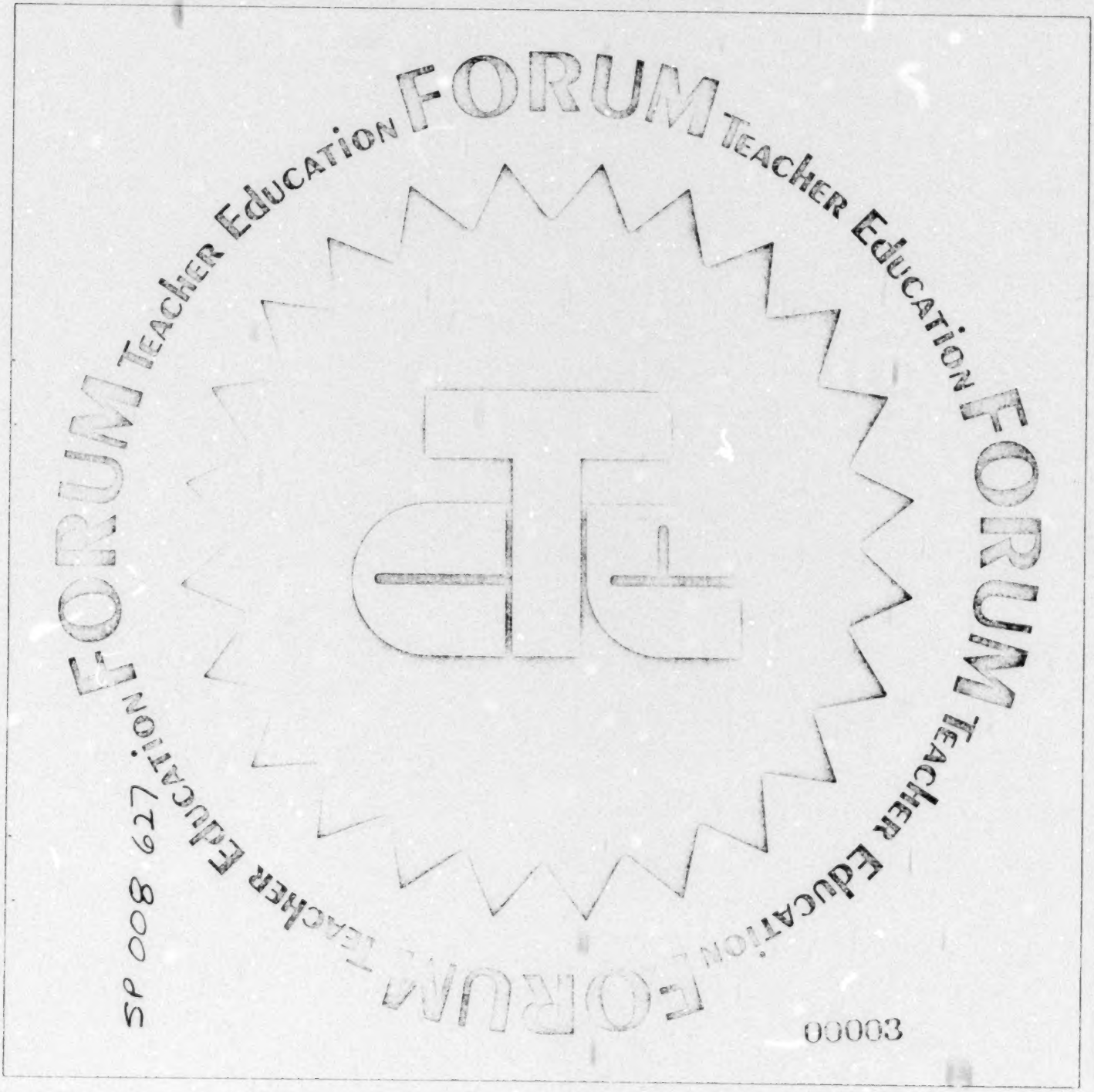


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# ALTERNATIVE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCES: EMERGING CHARACTERISTICS AND ENCOURAGING PAYOFFS

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## Introduction

Education majors on college campuses today are increasingly interested in special student teaching programs built upon new objectives and featuring innovational operational components. Several foci for student teaching assignments currently command the commitment of pre-service teachers. Perhaps the most desired alternative field experience in the seventies is an assignment to a school in a culturally rich ethnic minority group setting. Undoubtedly most directors of student teaching have been approached by socially conscious elementary and secondary education majors who actively seek the opportunity to reality test their cultural coping and teaching abilities in the barrio/reservation/inner city/mountain hollow/wind-swept plain. Other requests are received for placements in schools utilizing innovative, powerful, well-publicized curricular packages (e.g., Man-A Course of Study or Harvard Project Physics). Schools with emerging organizational patterns such as differentiated staffing, the IGE - Multi-unit approach, and effective team teaching are also high on preferred placement lists. Still other student teachers clamor for experience in alternative schools, schools that are implementing competency based instruction or learning by contract, and in schools where individualized instruction is the dominant theme. Even multi-assignments are sought by some ambitious pre-service teachers who feel that combination placements in more than one grade/area in more than one school in two or more communities of diverse characteristics will better prepare them to teach in a nation growing culturally pluralistic.

Unfortunately, there is often a great chasm between the undergraduate's will to serve in an alternative field setting and the university's ability to place and supervise individuals or small groups in non-mainstream school environments. An omnipresent lack of funds and frequently an abundance of constraining traditions, rules, inertia, and apprehension tend to preclude the placement of student teachers in remote but viable assignments. As a result, great numbers of pre-service teachers report each semester to conventional student teaching duties in: (1) the campus demonstration school, (2) in the public schools of the university town, and (3) in a public school in the student's "back home" neighborhood.

There are many educators who argue that we are perpetuating our nation's educational problems by preserving traditional university course offerings and conventional student teaching placements. They maintain that we can no longer continue to prepare young teachers to teach only pupils who are culturally like themselves. As the student bodies of school systems become more multicultural through cross-bussing programs, and general population dispersal, as educational innovations are widely replicated, and as historically ignored minority needs are better fulfilled, teachers applying for their first position must show evidence that they are cosmopolitan in outlook and capable of implementing a wide range of instructional approaches in diverse cultural settings. New teachers should realize that one can't expect to "go home again" in an era of sweeping social change.

Several universities, attuned to escalating educational expectations, are operating innovative field programs in-state, out-of-state, and out-of-nation. Site

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clusters, teacher centers, and integrated programs featuring methods course instruction and student teaching are proliferating. Even one of the Regional Educational Laboratories supported by the United States Office of Education has experimented heavily with the cultural immersion of pre-service teachers in the inner city.

Directors of field experiences are more apt to develop similar field alternatives if they know that students can survive them and will evaluate them highly, and that educational employers will respect them and employ their graduates. Skeptics and/or opponents of these emerging student teaching programs often pose disturbing questions--disturbing if there are no data upon which to base optimistic answers. Will in-state school systems employ student teachers whose only teaching experience is out-of-state? Will mainstream suburban systems be interested in beginning teachers who served in American Indian or Chicano schools/communities? Will school employers employ a beginning teacher who took some methods courses after completing student teaching, or who taught for only half-days rather than full days? Why develop out-of-state projects when graduates almost always take home state positions? After the program graduates have tackled the real teaching world, will they still look back on their innovative field experience as lastingly valuable and appropriate?

Indiana University has developed a number of alternative field experiences. Questions similar to those previously stated have been heard in relation to these experiences. Data has been gathered from graduates of three of these teacher preparation alternatives: (1) the Professional Year Program, (2) the American Indian Student Teaching Program, and (3) the Latino Student Teaching Program. Recently collected data partially answer the above questions, lend encouragement to directors of student teaching who would like to develop or replicate innovative field opportunities, and stimulate increased undergraduate confidence in available alternatives. After presenting the reader with a brief description of each program, attitudinal and employment-related data will be reported.

## Professional Year Program

This program integrates fifteen semester hours of elementary methods, three semester hours of community experiences, and fifteen hours of student teaching over both semesters of the senior year. Language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies methods are all taught on-site in elementary schools. The pre-service participants student teach for a half-day each day and are placed on two or more grade levels with two or more teachers in two or more schools. University staff and public school teachers work together closely. In-service teachers make contributions to methods classes, while professors make classroom demonstrations and offer in-service education activities. Three supervision specialists each spend eighteen regularly scheduled hours per week assisting classroom teachers in the structured supervision of 70-90 program participants. Methods professors also spend at least one half day per week in supervisory functions. The professors are interested in observing whether their methods offerings are applicable to the real world of the public school and whether their pre-service students effectively apply methods principles while instructing children. As a culminating experience, the student teachers are paired and each pair team teaches for five weeks of full days at the end of the year.

The objectives of the Professional Year Program are: (1) to broaden and intensify the educational preparation of pre-service teachers, (2) to strengthen the practical value of methods instruction by integrating it daily with student teaching, (3) to provide student teachers with more effective supervision, (4) to strengthen the supervisory capabilities of classroom teachers, (5) to strengthen the reality

orientation of methods professors and to increase teacher-professor communication, and (6) to make program graduates attractive to prospective employers.

## The American Indian Student Teaching Program

Elementary and secondary school student teaching placements are available for a full semester in Arizona schools serving Navajo and Hopi children. All participants complete a prerequisite course dealing with American Indian education, cultural considerations of importance to Anglo teachers of native American youth, and issues confronting American Indians today. A special one or two week workshop featuring input from native American consultants is conducted prior to the departure of participants to the Southwest. Each student teacher is expected to live only on-site (no commuting to suburbia), teach all day, supervise recreational and field trip activities, continue culture-oriented reading, and report in detail to project director each week on all non-classroom learning experiences with native Americans and with their cultural happenings. American Indian educators serve as supervision specialists and as cultural consultants to the pre-service teachers at each site. Special observation critique forms are completed periodically by supervising teachers, supervision specialists, and student teachers. A self-rating and external rating procedure associated with these forms stimulates considerable discussion of the teaching behaviors of the student teachers.

The objectives of the American Indian Student Teaching Project are: (1) to increase the ability of beginning teachers to function in the classroom as effective and understanding teachers of American Indian youth, (2) to increase student teacher understanding of the history, culture, values, and aspirations of American Indians, (3) to make a significant contribution toward the development and acceptance of cultural pluralism in our national life, and (4) to make program graduates attractive to prospective employers in communities where cultural sensitivity and adaptation is important to teaching success.

## The Latino Student Teaching Program

In this program elementary and secondary majors have the opportunity to live and teach in a Latino neighborhood in Arizona or in the Chicago-East Chicago-Gary area. All placements are for sixteen to seventeen weeks. Each participant completes a prerequisite course dealing with Latino education, cultural considerations of importance to Anglo teachers of Latino youth, and issues confronting Latinos today. Many of the program enrollees take extra Spanish courses to enhance their communication potential. Participants accept many innovative responsibilities during the placement period. They: (1) student teach daily in schools enrolling large numbers of Spanish-speaking students, (2) spend a portion of each day serving as a teacher assistant in an elementary school (if a secondary major) or in a secondary school (if an elementary major), (3) perform seven-ten hours of volunteer work weekly in community agencies serving Latino people, (4) assist weekly in the instruction of at least one evening adult education class, and (5) aid in the chaperoning of a wide assortment of school events and field trips. Bilingual educators are sought as supervision specialists and cultural consultants to the student teachers. Supervision procedures and forms are quite similar to those used in the American Indian Student Teaching Program. Program participants seek housing with Spanish-speaking citizens of the community and actively examine local adult bilingual programs. Secondary Spanish majors are particularly attracted to this project so they can immerse themselves in the culture and continously exercise their oral Spanish ability

inside and outside of the public school.

Major objectives of the Latino Project are: (1) to increase the ability of beginning teachers to function in the classroom as effective and understanding teachers of Latino youth, (2) increase student teacher understanding of the history, culture, values, and aspirations of Spanish speaking people, (3) to make a significant contribution toward the development and acceptance of cultural pluralism in our national life, and (4) to make program graduates attractive to employers in the many school systems enrolling Latinos--the nation's second largest ethnic minority group.

## Findings

For the 1972-73 academic year a total of 86 pre-service teachers enrolled in the Professional Year Program. The Latino and American Indian Projects attracted a total of 30 student teachers during the same time interval. One hundred thirteen of the participants found the alternative experiences appropriate and challenging, and successfully completed them. Three participants found that the particular alternative was "not for them" and withdrew very early in the semester. Of the total 116 student teachers, 30 sought minority culture and 29 applied for and received out-of-state placement. All students in all three field alternatives paid, out of personal funds, the transportation, room, and board costs associated with the programs.

In September 1973 follow-up surveys were mailed to all 113 graduates of the 1972-73 Professional Year, Latino, and American Indian alternatives. These surveys sought to determine: (1) the employment status of the respondent, (2) the school system and region to which position applications were made, (3) the type of non-teaching position held by the respondent, if any, (4) the retrospective evaluation given the special field experience by the graduate, and (5) the graduate's perception of the reaction of educational employers to the special preparation obtained in the alternative program. Data obtained by way of this "Position Placement Survey" are presented and discussed as follows.

TABLE 1
PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND
SUBSEQUENT EMPLOYMENT

| PARAMETERS | Field Alternatives | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Professional Year | American Indian | Latino | Total | % |
| Number of Original Enrollees | 86 | 26 | 4 | 116 | --- |
| Program Withdrawals | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2.6% |
| Program Graduates | 85 | 24 | 4 | 113 | 97.4% |
| Respondents to September, 1973 Survey | 76 | 20 | 4 | 100 | 88.5% |
| Respondents Who Applied for Teaching Positions | 63 | 16 | 4 | 83 | 83.0% |
| Successful Applicants for Teaching Positions | 48 | 14 | 3 | 65 | 78.3% |
| Respondents Who Obtained Non-Teaching Positions | 17 | 2 | 1 | 20 | 20.0% |

Table 1 indicates that the great majority of students (97.4%) who elected these many faceted, usually demanding field alternatives did complete their full assignment. When surveyed by mail four to nine months after completing the student teaching experience, 88.5% of the graduates returned data regarding the experience. From this high rate of survey return it may be inferred that: (1) positive faculty-student relationships characterized the alternative programs, and (2) program graduates truly valued their field experiences and wished to support the university's efforts through provision of retrospective evaluations.

Teaching positions were sought by 83 of the 100 survey respondents. The most frequent reasons for not seeking a teaching position for September, 1973 were: (1) a need to complete required undergraduate courses, (2) a desire to begin work on a Masters degree immediately, (3) a preference for remaining at home with one's infant or to await the birth of a child, and (4) an inability to identify a potential site for a position due to transfer or travel of husband/wife. Of the 83 respondents who sought teaching positions, 65 (or 78.3%) obtained 1973-74 contracts. It is important to note that where 48 of 63 participants in the local Professional Year program secured employment (76.2%), 17 of 20 applicants from the combined American Indian and Latino Projects signed contracts (85.0%). Students who gained their field experience in out-of-state, culturally unique placement sites did not find their innovative preparation to be an obstacle to lucrative employment. In fact, they obtained positions at somewhat higher salary rates than student teachers who elected Professional Year sites in the campus town under close and continuous supervision of university faculty. A lack of mobility penalized several of the 15 unsuccessful Professional Year position candidates. With husbands or wives in Graduate School at Indiana University, they were limited to applying to the local public school system--a system that often has eight or more applicants for each elementary school vacancy.

TABLE 2
LOCALES WHERE POSITIONS SOUGHT
AND POSITIONS ACCEPTED

| PARAMETERS | Field Alternatives | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Professional Year | American Indian | Latino | Total | % |
| Number of In-State Teaching Applications Made | *No data | 4 | 1 | 5 | 11.9% of 42 |
| Number of Out-of-State Teaching Applications Made | *No data | 33 | 4 | 37 | 88.1% of 42 |
| Number of In-State Positions Accepted | 32 | 3 | 1 | 36 | 55.4% of 65 |
| Number of Out-of-State Positions Accepted | 16 | 11 | 2 | 29 | 44.6% of 65 |

*Through oversight, an item dealing with types of position applications was omitted on the Professional Year Program fall, 1972 survey.

Table 2 indicates that 24 respondents to Latino and American Indian Program position placement surveys made a total of 42 formal position applications. Out-of-state school systems were the recipients of 88.1% of these applications. Those students who actively sought out-of-state field experiences strongly tended to seek out-of-state employment as well. In addition, 16 of 48 Professional Year position takers (33 1/3%) were faculty members in out-of-state schools by September. When all successful position applicants are combined, it may be noted that 29 of 65 (44.6%) left the state of Indiana to teach. The data discourage occasional criticisms that education majors seek alternative placements for sight-seeing purposes or other personal predelections with every intent of returning back home to settle down once the field experience ends. To the contrary, there seems to be a national job market and students seem willing to prepare for it and compete in it.

Do participants in alternative field programs ultimately become teachers of middle class white students? Or do they teach in schools that serve multicultural populations? Table 3 reveals that 21.5% of the respondents are working with large numbers of Black students, 13.9% are teaching in American Indian schools, 10.7% are serving large numbers of Latino youth, 15.4% are instructing rural white boys and girls, and 38.5% are the instructors of "mainstream" youth. Almost half of the 65 beginning teachers were employed in schools that could safely be considered "ethnic minority group schools" or "multicultural schools." All of the position holders who chose student teaching in the Latino and American Indian Program accepted employment in non-WASP type neighborhoods.

TABLE 3
CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL POPULATIONS
SERVED BY PROGRAM GRADUATES

| | Field Alternatives | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Professional Year | American Indian | Latino | Total | % of 65 |
| Black Student Body (90-100%) | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 13.8 |
| Black Student Body (25-40%) | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 7.7 |
| American Indian Student Body (90-100%) | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 13.9 |
| Latino Student Body (80-100%) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1.5 |
| Latino Student Body (40-70%) | 5 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 9.2 |
| White Student Body (85-100%) | 25 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 38.5 |
| White Rural Student Body (80-100%) | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 15.4 |
| TOTALS | 48 | 14 | 3 | 65 | 100.0 |

Three factors seem to explain the cultural characteristics of the schools these beginning teachers selected. First, schools of the nation are growing more multicultural and beginning teachers, regardless of the nature of their pre-service preparation, must expect to work in them. Second, by preparing pre-service teachers in special ethnic minority group communities, universities encourage and enable graduates to accept

teaching responsibilities in multicultural schools. Third, many education majors are (and have been) culturally sensitive and socially conscious, and privately search for positions in which they can serve those people hitherto least well served. No matter what explanation best fits position-taking trends, universities must intensify efforts to add multicultural staff, multicultural materials, and multicultural field experiences to the total teacher preparation program.

The data displayed in Table 4 are encouraging to the staffs of innovative field programs, to university administrators who authorize such programs, to seniors examining student teaching options, and to prospective employers of program graduates. The former participants in all three programs feel that educators involved in position interviewing processes were positively impressed with the special field experiences. The beginning teachers perceived each of the field experiences as an important factor leading to employment. Most importantly, all three groups reported that their alternative field experience made them feel very well prepared to execute the professional responsibilities they were encountering in their first two months as an in-service teacher. Program directors and School of Education administrators can take heart. The most positive mean scores on the survey (6.4, 6.8, 7.0) argue for the continued support and preservation of each alternative by the University. Student teaching featuring cultural adaptation, longer assignments, structured observations by teachers and supervision specialists, work in community agencies, and close monitoring by program staff is desired, completed and valued by today's undergraduate!

TABLE 4
RESPONSES TO EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS
CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE FIELD EXPERIENCES

N's Professional Year = 76, American Indian = 20, Latino = 4

1. As you interviewed for teaching positions, how impressed were interviewing school administrators and teachers with the preparatory experience you received in your program?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| They were very negatively impressed | | | Not particularly impressed one way or the other | | | They were very positively impressed |

Means: Professional Year = 5.8, American Indian = 6.1, Latino = 5.9

2. To what degree do you feel your special program experiences helped you in obtaining a teaching position?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| They jeopardized my chances greatly | | | They played no role | | | They improved my chances greatly |

Means: Professional Year = 5.6, American Indian = 6.1, Latino = 6.0

3. As a result of your special program experiences, to what degree do you feel prepared in your first teaching position this September, 1973?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feel very poorly prepared | | | Feel I have average preparation | | | Feel very well prepared |

Mean: Professional Year = 5.6, American Indian = 6.1, Latino = 6.3

TABLE 4 (cont'd)
RESPONSES TO EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS
CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE FIELD EXPERIENCES

4. Special programs are somewhat more costly teacher preparation alternatives. Should the Indiana University School of Education keep your special program for student teachers in the years ahead?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Should drop the program | | | Doesn't matter if kept or dropped | | | Should definitely keep program despite costs |

Means: Professional Year = 6.4, American Indian = 6.8, Latino = 7.0

5. Do you feel that various Indiana University members of your special program staff made efforts to assist you to obtain a teaching position for 1973-74?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Made efforts to prevent me from obtaining a position | | | Made casual efforts--little influence one way or the other | | | Made very helpful assistance efforts |

Means: Professional Year = 5.0, American Indian = 5.0, Latino = 6.0

6. Do you feel that the principals and/or supervising teachers to whom you were assigned in the cooperating elementary or secondary schools made efforts to assist you to obtain a teaching position for 1973-74?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Made efforts to prevent me from obtaining a position | | | Made casual efforts--little influence one way or the other | | | Made very helpful assistance efforts |

Means: Professional Year = 5.0, American Indian = 5.6, Latino = 5.1

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Somewhat lower means characterize survey items 5 and 6, which deal with assistance given the program participant by staff members and supervising teachers as he/she attempted to secure a teaching position. Without being defensive, there are two apparent explanations of these less favorable scores. Unsuccessful applicants for teaching contracts tended to blame their unemployment on staff and/or teachers. They often assumed that final recommendations were negative, or at least not sufficiently positive. Other respondents who checked low evaluations were not aware of the staff and/or teacher efforts to publicize the program, accent its unusual demands, augment the graduate's collection of position recommendations, respond to employer inquiries, and make telephone calls on behalf of the graduate.

Means of 5.0 or higher still attest to the extra time invested by staff and teachers in promoting program participants for teaching openings. A Placement Office normally provides job procurement assistance. A program staff normally budgets its time for program development, operation, and evaluation--not job placement services. Participants in alternative field programs are more fortunate than most education majors: they generally have Placement Office personnel and program personnel both as employment agents. Then, too, the job candidate must sell himself/herself to prospective employers. (S)he who is unemployed must accept prime responsibility for

achieving payroll status. Thus, graduates of these alternative programs "had three human sources going for them." A 78.3% employment rate during a time of teacher surplus implies one or more of three sources was effective.

## Concluding Suggestions

1. Schools of education should remain abreast of socio-educational changes and student aspirations by developing and implementing innovative student teaching programs oriented to diverse school and community characteristics.

2. Trainers of pre-service teachers should expect geographically mobile graduates to seek employment in a national (opposed to local) educational market that is destined to become even more multicultural.

3. Programs that provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to live, work, and adapt as the minority representatives within a relatively large ethnic group community should be given high priority.

4. Student teacher placements should not be limited to in-state schools--nor to "back home," the campus town, or campus commuting distance.

5. To make innovative multicultural field experiences fiscally more feasible, consortia or leagues of colleges/universities should be formed to exchange, orient, and supervise each other's student teachers. Little has been done to create a national student teaching network; so much seems possible.

6. A multicultural faculty should teach the methods and other course prerequisites to student teaching. Each education major should have the opportunity to interact with instructors of ethnic groups different from his own.

7. Student teaching alternatives in ethnic minority settings should feature the utilization of supervision specialists representing the appropriate ethnic minority group. These specialists shoul. be local residents competent to conduct cultural sensitivity workshops with all the student teachers assigned to that site.

8. Student teaching alternatives close to the campus should feature real (as opposed to purported) integration between methods and student teaching. There should be a set of common understandings and expectations established between methods professors, supervising teachers, university supervision specialists, and student teachers. Time obviously has to be found and purchased in which role definitions can be constructed collaboratively, and communication maintained. This implies that university instructors must follow their education majors into the public schools for a few hours each semester.

9. Both supervising teachers and supervision specialists should observe student teachers regularly in the act of teaching. Specific observation forms should be utilized and critique conferences should follow each observation. Where possible, videotaping procedures might augment or replace and direct observation critique.

10. To facilitate in-depth supervision by public school and university personnel, student teachers should be "clustered" in both out-of-state and in-state sites. "Roadrunning" time of supervision specialists must be converted into pre-observational conferences, observations, and post-observational conferences.